

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 013820 TOSEC 010002

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.:TH

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR

S/S :RKUCHEL

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TO USDEL SECRETARY AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 013820 TOSEC 010002

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, IS, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: PROPOSED MESSAGE TO ISRAEL
ON LEBANESE SITUATION (S/S NO.7601242)

FROM ATHERTON

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, THE FOLLOWING,
FOR YOUR APPROVAL, IS A PROPOSED MESSAGE TO TEL AVIV.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, IS, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
SECRET/NODIS

FOR CHARGE FROM SECRETARY
SECRET

SECRET

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DURING MEETING WITH ME JANUARY 19, DINITZ PASSED ALONG THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE ABOUT LEBANON FROM FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON:

"OUR INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT IN THE LAST TWO DAYS TWO BATTALIONS OF PLA HAVE ENTERED LEBANON. ONE IS A BATTALION OF THE SHITIN BRIGADE WHICH WENT TO TRIPOLI. ANOTHER IS A BATTALION OF KHADASIA BRIGADE; THIS WENT INTO SAKHLE. OUR INTELLIGENCE IS THAT TONIGHT, THAT IS AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, A THIRD BATTALION, ALSO OF THE KHADASIA BRIGADE, WILL ENTER INTO SAKHLE. WE ALSO HAVE INFORMATION THAT ANOTHER BATTALION OF THE SAME BRIGADE IS PREPARING TO ENTER. ON TOP OF THIS, INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOR MOBILIZATION OF THE RESERVE FORCES OF THE PLA. ALL THESE FORCES ARE GENERALLY UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE SYRIAN GENERAL STAFF. THIS IS ON TOP OF THE 2,000 SAIQA WHICH ARE ALREADY IN LEBANON. WE EXPRESS OUR CONCERN AT THIS DEVELOPMENT AND REGARD IT AS THE FIRST STAGE OF A SYRIAN INCURSION INTO LEBANON. THE FOREIGN MINISTER DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SYRIANS WILL BRING IN ADDITIONAL BATTALIONS, INCLUDING REGULAR SYRIAN BATTALIONS UNDER PALESTINIAN FLAGS, AS THEY DID IN JORDAN IN 1970. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT THESE BATTALIONS CAN OVERRUN THE CHRISTIANS AT THE MOMENT. HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THE SECRETARY HAS ANY COMMENT ON THIS."

YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND TELL HIM THAT OUR OWN INFORMATION GENERALLY ACCORDS WITH WHAT HE PROVIDED TO US THROUGH AMBASSADOR DINITZ ABOUT MOVEMENT OF PLA UNITS INTO LEBANON. WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INDICATIONS OF ANY PLANNED MOVEMENTS OF REGULAR SYRIAN ARMY UNITS, AND OUR PRESENT ESTIMATE IS THAT CHRISTIAN FORCES ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE OVERRUN BY ADDITION OF THESE PLA BATTALIONS. WE AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS AND THAT LEBANESE SITUATION IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS.

IN LIGHT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, WE ARE INSTRUCTING
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AMBASSADOR MURPHY TO EXPRESS OUR GREAT CONCERN TO SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND TO WARN SYRIANS AGAINST UNILATERAL INTERVENTION IN LEBANESE SITUATION. WE WILL ALSO BE UNDERTAKING EXCHANGES WITH INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO REAFFIRM IMPORTANCE OF ENCOURAGING LEBANESE FACTIONS TO WORK FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL REQUIRE SOME ACCOMMODATION ON ALL SIDES OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT. MEANWHILE, WE

MUST STRESS AGAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF MAXIMUM RESTRAINT
ON ISRAEL'S PART. WE KNOW THAT ISRAELIS ARE SENSITIVE
TO EXTREME DELICACY OF THE SITUATION, WHICH IS FURTHER
COMPLICATED BY INTER-ARAB TENSIONS. IT IS OF UTMOST
IMPORTANCE TO EVALUATE CAREFULLY THE SIGNIFICANCE AND
IMPACT OF ANY MOVES, POLITICAL OR MILITARY, THAT MAY

BE MADE BY SYRIA OR OTHER ARABS AND TO AVOID ANY
PRECIPITATE REACTIONS WHICH COULD FURTHER EXACERBATE
THINGS. WE HAVE TAKEN A FIRM PUBLIC STAND AGAINST
OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND WILL CONTINUE TO
DO SO. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH LEBANESE SITUATION
AND REACTIONS OF OTHERS TO IT MOST CAREFULLY AND WANT
TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ISRAELIS DURING THIS
PERIOD.

END MESSAGE.

3. RECOMMENDATION: THAT YOU APPROVE THE ABOVE MESSAGE.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

4. DRAFTED: NEA:ALATHERTON, JR. APPROVED:NEA:ALATHERTON
CLEARED: S/S :RKUCHEL (SUBS) SISCO

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